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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Terry Goddard Issues Opinion Allowing School Salary Increases

(Phoenix, Ariz. – Sept. 6, 2006) Attorney General Terry Goddard today issued a legal opinion that Arizona school districts and charter schools can amend contracts of non-administrative employees to reflect increases in salary and benefits appropriated by the Arizona Legislature earlier this summer.

The question was whether the compensation increases would violate provisions of the Arizona Constitution that prohibit a gift of public funds. Goddard concluded that any salary increase stemming from the Legislature's \$100 million appropriation is allowed under the Arizona Constitution.

"The salary increases authorized by the Legislature undeniably serve an important public purpose," Goddard wrote. Citing previous holdings by Arizona courts, Goddard concluded, "The Legislature can appropriately decide to grant compensation increases."

A copy of the opinion is attached.

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